

REMARKS

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's time by telephone on December 11, 2006 to discuss the rejections of the claims. Claims 1-7 and 13-20 are pending. Claims 1, 2 and 13 are amended herein with the support of at least Fig. 3 of the present application. Claims 8-12 and 21-37 have been withdrawn from consideration. No new matter has been added.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner asserted that claims 1-3, 6-7, 13-14, and 19-20 are unpatentable over AAPA in view of U.S. 6,641,874 (Kuntz et al.; "Kuntz") and further in view of U.S. 6,911,238 (Okawa et al.; "Okawa") under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claim 1 is amended herein to recite that "the linear polarizer is disposed between the liquid crystal panel and the phase difference film." Claims 2 and 13 are amended herein to clarify that the phase difference film transmits light from the circular polarizer to a liquid crystal panel. Applicants maintain, as in the previous response, that the Examiner has provided no motivation to combine the multilayer reflective film of Kuntz with the transmissive optical film of AAPA to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as discussed in detail in Applicants' prior response.

Applicants also maintain that the Examiner has not provided any evidence to support his assertion that "as a general available knowledge, such directly coating and contacting would reduce the thickness of the device, so as to reduce the light absorption and increasing the brightness..." (Emphasis is Examiner's.) The Examiner claims that Okawa provides such evidence (col. 23, lines 16-42). Applicants respectfully disagree.

Okawa provides no evidence that it is common knowledge in the art to directly coat films to reduce the thickness of an optical device and thus improve brightness. To the contrary, Okawa teaches that, by including the polarization selective film 18' and the retarder 17 on the polarizing plate 14, "the loss of light entering polarization selective film 18' and exiting light-absorbing polarizing plate 14 is remarkably reduced as compared with the case where it is passed through only light-absorbing plate 14." (col.

23, lines 25-28) (Emphasis added.) In other words, Okawa teaches that by adding the optical films 18' and 17 to the polarizing plate 14, light losses are reduced (or brightness is improved) compared to when only the polarizing plate 14 is used. There is no teaching of a reduced device thickness. Indeed, one could safely assume the thickness of the device increases with the addition of the films 18' and 17. Based on the teachings of Okawa, an optical device having an increased thickness (due to the inclusion of optical films 18' and 17) may have an increased brightness. Accordingly, the Examiner's assertion that it is common knowledge in the art to reduce the thickness of the device in order to reduce light absorption and increase brightness cannot be correct. At the very least, the assertion is not supported by Okawa.

For at least the preceding reasons, the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1-3, 6-7, 13-14, and 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

The Examiner asserted that claims 4-5 and 16-17 are unpatentable over AAPA and Kuntz as applied to claims 1-3, 6-7, 13-14, and 19-20, and further in view of U.S. 6,882,386 B2 (Moon et al.) under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

The Examiner also asserted that claim 15 is unpatentable over AAPA and Kuntz as applied to claims 1-3, 6-7, 13-14, and 19-20 above, and further in view of U.S. 5,110,623 (Yuasa et al.).

The Examiner also asserted that claim 18 is unpatentable over AAPA and Kuntz as applied to claims 1-3, 6-7, 13-14, and 19-20 above, and further in view of U.S. 6,879,356 (Hsieh et al.).

Applicants respectfully disagree, at least in view of the remarks made above. Per the preceding arguments, the Examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness to support a 35 U.S.C § 103 rejection of claims 1, 2 and 13. Claims 4-5 are dependent on claim 2, and claims 15, 16-17, and 18 are dependent on claim 13. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 4-5 and 16-17, claim 15, and claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 be withdrawn.

Summary

Applicants believe that the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney for the Applicants via telephone if such communication would expedite allowance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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